

Washington



Building a Healthy, Active Community

Public Health Problem

Between 1990 and 2002, the obesity rate among adults in Washington State increased by 127 percent. Today, nearly three out of every five state residents is overweight or obese. Improved eating habits and increased physical activity are keys to reversing this trend, but in communities throughout the state, numerous barriers exist to making these healthful changes.

In Moses Lake, a small, central Washington city, there is a need for better access to healthy foods at home, at school, and in the workplace. In addition, Moses Lake, like other communities, needs additional resources to make physical activity safe and accessible for all its residents.

Taking Action

A series of interventions in Moses Lake, known collectively as Healthy Communities Moses Lake, encourages good nutrition and physical activity behaviors through environmental and policy change. Both Moses Lake and Grant County, where Moses Lake resides, have adopted an overall Healthy Communities action plan. Specifically, the city has adopted a master plan to replace a railroad that runs through the downtown area with a path for biking and walking. The county adopted a plan for creating walking and biking trails alongside irrigation canals. New zoning ordinances in both the city and county require wider sidewalks that will increase accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

The city has incorporated the community garden project into its parks and recreation department work plan. The project is building capacity through integration with county nutrition activities and youth wellness team projects in the community as well as the development of a community-based oversight and planning group for the garden. The garden project has forged links with local school groups and chefs to make the garden both a food source and educational tool for the community.

In addition, to encourage good nutrition from birth, Healthy Communities aims to inform residents about proper breastfeeding practices as well as create supportive environments for nursing mothers throughout the community. Planned activities include meeting with local business representatives to discuss breastfeeding policies in the workplace, daycare provider workshops and continued educational forums, and various community advertising and promotion efforts.

Implications and Impact

As a result of the positive steps Moses Lake is taking with regard to community nutrition and physical activity, the City of Mount Vernon has adopted a Healthy Communities action plan of its own as part of the City's comprehensive plan.

Contact Information

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